Military Veterans Oppose President Trump's Muslim Ban

President Trump's Muslim ban emboldens our enemies, undermines our alliances around the world, and makes America less safe. In addition to <ins>national security experts, business and labor leaders, and religious organizations</ins>, U.S. military veterans strongly oppose the ban. In fact, <ins>more than 200 military veterans sent a letter to President Trump</ins>, urging him to rescind the unconstitutional order. They wrote:

"One only needs look at the people who have been hurt by this order so far to see that **it does nothing to keep our country safer and everything to damage the ideals that we hold most dear**…. Some of the people hurt by your executive order are interpreters, who served alongside us on the frontlines in Iraq and Afghanistan. They believed in the values we said we were fighting for, and put their lives on the line to prove it -- helping us navigate language, culture, and terrain, and even picking up a rifle and saving our skins. In exchange for their service, we promised them and their families safe passage to a land where they would be free from those hunting them and judged not by where they were from, but by who they intended to become. But **your executive order breaks that promise**…. Mr. President, rescind this order. Reaffirm that America is a place promising opportunity and tolerance for all who subscribe to our values, and relight that torch those of us in the armed forces have carried across the world."

Over the past week, military service members have voiced their opposition to the ban, explaining how it puts our troops and allies at risk:

Allen Vaught, served as a U.S. Army Reserve Captain in Iraq from 2003 to 2004: "**Trump's executive order will put at risk the lives of thousands who have helped America.** It will also increase the risk for our troops serving in Iraq — our ally in the war on ISIL. With this message from the president, **what is the incentive for those translators (or our Iraqi allies for that matter) to stick with us, since we are not sticking with them?**" [USA Today, 1/31/17]

Phillip Lohaus, a decorated veteran of the U.S. Special Operations Command and CIA: "These individuals often put themselves at the risk of death for working with the U.S. and without the ability to offer them safety, **we will be reducing the likelihood that those in countries targeted by the ban will work with us in the future.**" [Newsweek, 1/28/17]

Matt Zeller, an Army veteran who served in Afghanistan and CEO and co-founder of No One Left Behind: "… **without Janis, my Afghan translator, I would not be speaking to you today.** I would have been killed by two Taliban fighters in the hills of Afghanistan and not fighting for interpreters' rights today." [The Hill, 1/27/17]

Andrew Biggio, a former Marine Sergeant who served in Iraq and Afghanistan: "Our lives, our families, we have everything to thank for our interpreters. We owe them, we owe them, we owe them … **You want to talk about saving American lives from terrorists – these interpreters did that, they saved a lot of our lives**." [Charlotte Observer, 1/29/17]

Chase Millsap, a former Marine infantry officer who served multiple tours in Iraq**:** "These are people who served directly alongside of us... A lot of these guys are directly under threat and going underground. **Let's make sure they have a path to safety**." [Los Angeles Times, 1/29/17]

Ajmal Achekzai, a Marine veteran and a refugee from Afghanistan: "When I heard that people who can't protect themselves aren't able to be protected as refugees here, that hit me extremely hard…**As a Marine, you're taught to protect.**" [Buzzfeed, 1/29/17]

Jeffrey Buchalter, an Army veteran who served multiple tours in Iraq: "**This is not what we fought for**, having been in Iraq and working with these interpreters." [Los Angeles Times, 1/29/17]